



Emergency Nurses Association Hails Colorado's New Workplace Violence Law

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(June 8, 2015) – The [Emergency Nurses Association](#) hails Colorado for joining the growing ranks of states that have increased penalties against those who harm emergency medical care providers. After overwhelming support from the Colorado General Assembly in early May, legislation (SB15-067) authored by state Sen. John Cooke became law on Friday, June 5.

The new law raises the classification from assault in the third degree (a misdemeanor) to assault in the second degree (a felony) for the following criminal actions:

- intentionally causing bodily injury (assault) to an emergency medical care provider; or
- causing a peace officer, firefighter, emergency medical care or service provider, while engaged in his or her professional duties, to come into contact with bodily fluids with the intent to harass, annoy, or threaten

“Colorado has now joined the ranks of states that have recognized the seriousness of attacks on emergency nurses and other emergency medical care providers and have acted to protect them,” said ENA President Matthew F. Powers, MS, BSN, RN, MICP, CEN. “We applaud Colorado for taking that step and thank Senator Cooke for introducing and championing this legislation through the legislature and into law.”

A [2014 study](#) published in the [Journal of Emergency Nursing](#) shows that more than 70 percent of emergency nurses encountered physical or verbal assault by patients or visitors while they were providing care in the emergency setting.

Colorado joins thirty-one other states that have enacted laws making it a felony to assault or batter an emergency nurse. Most recently, Louisiana and Idaho joined the list of states that have strengthened their laws protecting emergency nurses against violence.

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About the Emergency Nurses Association

The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) is the premier professional nursing association dedicated to defining the future of emergency nursing through advocacy, education, research, innovation, and leadership. Founded in 1970, ENA has proven to be an indispensable resource to the global emergency nursing community. With more than 40,000 members worldwide, ENA advocates for patient safety, develops industry-leading practice standards and guidelines, and guides emergency healthcare public policy. ENA members have expertise in triage, patient care, disaster preparedness, and all aspects of emergency care. Additional information is available at www.ena.org.